

President's Note for November 2020

"Soon it's gonna rain, I can feel it." Tom Jones

I awakened this morning to wind and much cooler weather and these lyrics from the musical *The Fantasticks* popped into my head. Yes, for those wondering, the Tom Jones here is an American lyricist not the Welsh singer! For fire fighters, farmers and the rest of us I pray that soon we do receive some much needed rain. While we have received minimal precipitation here so far in 2020 in Sacramento, at least in a metaphoric sense it's been a difficult, rainy year for the world and St. Paul's with COVID-19, distancing, suspension of physically gathering for worship and recently losing two of our dear friends and members. Ann Stork was an independent soul who brought us a spark of life with her spirit and to our congregation by helping bring Grace Presbyterian to our campus. Her son Mark is a member there. Jerry Perry has been our friend, organist, pianist and bringer of many a tasty potluck nibble. Our departed brother John Eastman brought Jerry our way. We'll miss them. Check out Jerry's beet salad recipe later in this newsletter. Also, keep Mark Zajac, who lived with Gerald, in your prayers. Mark is trying to find a reasonably priced place to room, so let him or us know if you are aware of a suitable place to stay. Final commendation arrangements for Jerry are pending. We'll give updates as we know more.

We've been blessed to have John Burow step forward and take Jerry's place as organist and pianist. Jerry and John knew each other and both have belonged to the American Guild of Organists. John tells us that in a sense he has just been on hiatus with us and has come full circle as he served at St. Paul's some years back as part of a rotation of organists. Welcome back John!

It felt great to gather again on October 04th when we celebrated seventy-five years of ministry. The breezeway proved to be an ideal setting for that celebration. Yet, with cooler weather and we pray some rainy days on the horizon, we can't rely on the breezeway as a place for worship heading towards winter months. Recently, each of you should have received either an e-mail or letter asking for your input on a return to physical worship. Regrettably, we only received a handful of responses. Of those responding, the feedback was mixed, with about half in favor of returning to worship in the sanctuary as soon as possible, with the other half indicating they would not feel comfortable returning until there is a safe, proven, readily available COVID-19 vaccine and or treatment. Our plans are as follows, with the understanding that a spike in viral cases, like we're now having in the Midwest and Europe, could change everything. We will be having our Sunday worship video recording session on Wednesdays at 11:00AM. This service will be simple and will include a celebration of the Eucharist with the host only. Those who would like to attend and participate are welcome with the understanding you must follow Corona virus protocol, meaning wear a mask, space and don't come if you have any signs of fever, viral symptoms or if you are aware you may have been recently exposed to the virus. Be safe. Love thy neighbor. Like many of our sister ELCA churches we are continuing to explore options for a return to Sunday gathering. St. John's is exploring a possible return to some form of physical gathering with the new church year in Advent and our church council is following their lead. We'll keep everyone posted on developments.

As I write this column our eastern overflow parking lot is being patched, sealed and restriped. The western fascia trim for the classrooms and hall were badly in need of paint and have been scraped, primed and repainted thanks to Pastor Townsend's handyman friend Ernie. And we're following up on, as we discussed at

our last congregational meeting, new, larger, more visible signage on the corner lawn area. COVID-19 protocol and not gathering these last few months have put the council in a position of having to improvise to some degree on normal protocol in terms of meeting, planning and expenditure approval. Know we are doing our best to be prudent and frugal as we work to maintain our campus and avoid larger expenses down the road. Signage, banners, activity, campus improvements and word of mouth let neighbors know we are still here!

November is a traditional time for both giving thanks and for stewardship drives. We truly give thanks to each of you for your continuing faithfulness and stewardship. Despite trials, thanks to you we are currently in the black for the year. Above all we give thanks to our Lord for continuing to watch over us in this troubled world and by His grace, mercy and love holding a place for us in the world to come as we do our best to navigate through these troubled times. As always, continue to pray for and assist those most in need as we continue to humbly give thanks for all that we have.

"Praise and thanksgiving, Father we offer For all things living, Created good..." Hymn 409 LBW

Gaelic tune, lyric by Albert F. Bayly

Thankfully,

Chuck Prewett

Council President